

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

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TO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: EGEN, ML

SUBJECT: US INVESTMENT IN MALI

REFS: (A) BAMAKO 806, (B) KILLION/BYRNE TELECON

1. AF/W COUNTRY OFFICER MET WITH GENERAL RICHARDSON AND ROGER ZION (REF B) TO DISCUSS THEIR INTEREST IN AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT IN MALI. GENERAL ROBERT C. RICHARDSON (USAF-RETIRED) IS PRESENTLY US EDITOR OF MAGAZINE "SAFETY AND SECURITY INTERNATIONAL" AND BUSINESS PROMOTER WITH SPECIAL INTEREST IN AFRICA. ZION, FORMER CONGRESSMAN FROM INDIANA, IS NOW PRESIDENT OF "THE BOSPORUS-POTOMAC," WASHINGTON-BASED CONSULTANTS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT.

2. RICHARDSON SAID HE IS EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY OF A SYSTEM OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BY US INVESTORS FORMED BY ZION AND HIS ASSOCIATES WHICH WOULD ENTAIL "SATELLITE" OPERATION IN MALI FOR AGRIBUSINESS. BY
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THIS HE MEANS ACCESS TO AND FROM THE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT SITE BY DIRECT CHARTERED AIRCRAFT, AN AGREEMENT WITH THE HOST GOVERNMENT FOR CUSTOMS CLEARANCES AT SITE RATHER THAN AT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS, AND PERMISSION TO OPERATE DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS LINKS FROM PROJECT SITE TO BUSINESS

HEADQUARTERS IN US. RICHARDSON AWARE THAT PERMISSION TO

OPERATE IN THIS MANNER WOULD BE PERHAPS UNIQUE, BUT HE BELIEVES IT MAY BE WORKED OUT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF MALI IF THE BENEFITS TO BE OBTAINED BY MALIANS FROM THE US INVESTMENT ARE SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE. ZION, WHO WOULD COORDINATE FINANCIAL BACKING AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE REQUIRED, TOLD COUNTRY OFFICER THAT HE HAS EXTENSIVE CONTACTS IN THE AGRIBUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES, WHO ARE FULLY CAPABLE OF CARRYING OUT ANY AGRICULTURAL-RELATED INVESTMENT PROJECT WHICH MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO MALI.

3. RICHARDSON AND ZION SAID PURPOSE OF MEETING WAS TO EXPLORE ECONOMIC, AND SPECIFICALLY AGRICULTURAL, SITUATION IN MALI, GET SOME THOUGHTS WITH REGARD TO DIRECTION POTENTIAL INVESTMENT MIGHT TAKE, AND OBTAIN SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH STATE, EMBASSY BAMAKO, AND GOVERNMENT OF MALI. RICHARDSON MENTIONED THAT HE HAD LAST YEAR DISCUSSED HIS ORIGINAL "SATELLITE" AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT PROJECT FOR GUINEA WITH FORMER AMBASSADOR TO MALI MCGUIRE, WHO HAD SUGGESTED RICHARDSON SWITCH HIS ATTENTION TO MALI, AS A MUCH MORE LIKELY PROSPECT.

4. COUNTRY OFFICER REVIEWED CURRENT STATE OF OUR GENERAL RELATIONS WITH MALI, DISCUSSED IN GENERAL TERMS ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK, AND DREW ON SUMMARY OF MALI AGRICULTURAL SECTOR ASSESSMENT REFERRED TO IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF REF A. COUNTRY OFFICER MENTIONED THAT THE ASSESSMENT WAS PREPARED UNDER CONTRACT FOR USAID AND THEREFORE COULD NOT BE HANDED OVER TO RICHARDSON AND HIS ASSOCIATES, BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT STRICTLY FACTUAL INFORMATION ON AGRICULTURAL BASE WOULD BE PROVIDED. COUNTRY OFFICER ALSO SUGGESTED THAT RICHARDSON AND ZION MIGHT TAKE OPPORTUNITY OF CDO LEVIN'S PRESENCE IN WASHINGTON FOR DISCUSSION OF MALI'S AGRICULTURAL SITUATION. RICHARDSON AND ZION PROMPTLY ASKED IF USAID FUNDS WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR THEIR PROJECT. COUNTRY OFFICER INFORMED THEM THAT THIS MOST UNLIKELY, AND THAT PURPOSE OF MEETING WITH LEVIN WOULD BE TO GET BETTER PICTURE FROM ON-THE-SCENE OBSERVER OF POTENTIALLY MUTUALLY PROFITABLE INVESTMENT AREAS IN AGRICULTURE. COUNTRY OFFICER ALSO MENTIONED THAT LEVIN IN EARLIER CONVERSATION HAD SUGGESTED MEAT PACKING AS ONE OF THE BEST PROSPECTS. RICHARDSON AND ZION RESPONDED THAT THEIR ASSOCIATES WERE WELL EQUIPPED TO HANDLE MEAT PACKING OPERATION, AND THAT THEY ALSO HAD SPECIAL EXPERTISE IN CORN AND SOYBEAN PRODUCTION.

5. COUNTRY OFFICER INFORMED RICHARDSON AND ZION THAT AFTER PROVISION OF AVAILABLE AGRICULTURAL BACKGROUND

INFORMATION HERE IN WASHINGTON, IT WOULD BE HIGHLY
ADVISABLE FOR THEM TO VISIT BAMAKO TO DISCUSS THEIR PRO-
POSAL WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND WITH MALIAN GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS AS APPROPRIATE. THEY AGREED TO GIVE THIS
SERIOUS CONSIDERATION AND TO REMAIN IN TOUCH WITH AF/W.

6. FYI: COUNTRY OFFICER ARRANGED BREAKFAST MEETING FOR
FOLLOWING WEEK BETWEEN RICHARDSON/ZION AND CDO LEVIN. END
FYI.
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